

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANJUL 01591 161949Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 EB-08 AID-05 TRSE-00 /095 W

-----012810 162006Z /50

P R 161255Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4878

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 1591

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GA SG

SUBJ: SENEGAL-GAMBIA DIFFERENCES OVER MID-RIVER DAM/BRIDGE

1. SERIOUS DIFFERENCES DEVELOPED BETWEEN SENEGALESE AND GAMBIA DELEGATIONS WHICH MET HERE NOV 8 AND 9 TO DISCUSS PROPOSED ROADWAY THROUGH THE GAMBIA AT MID-RIVER. LE SOLEIL HAS BEEN CARRYING ARTICLES WHICH CAST DISPUTE AS DEADLOCK, AND TALK OF CONSTRUCTION ALL-SENEGALESE ROAD WHICH WOULD SKIRT THE GAMBIA IN LONG SEMI-CIRCULAR ARCH STRETCHING FROM KAOLACK TO TAMBACOUNDA, THEN SOUTHWARD AND WEST INTO CASAMANCE. PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ASSURED CHARGE NOV 15 THAT WHILE DIFFERENCES PERSIST, SITUATION IS NOT AT INSOLVABLE IMPASSE.

2. ACCORDING TO TAAL, GOTG AGREED SOME TIME AGO TO CONSTRUCTION OF GAMBIA RIVER BRIDGE AT GAMBIA'S MID-SECTION. THEN IN JULY 1977, DURING JOINT MINISTERIAL MEETING IN DAKAR, GAMBIANS FORMALLY PROPOSED ANTI-SALINITY BARRAGE AT SAME POINT (WITH  
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PAGE 02 BANJUL 01591 161949Z

ROADWAY TO PASS OVER). SENEGALESE DECIDED THEY WOULD NOT OPPOSE THIS OPTION PROVIDED PROJECT COMPLETION WOULD NOT BE LENGTHENED, AND COST WOULD NOT BE GREATER. ON THIS BASIS, WITH BRITISH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, GAMBIANS PROCEEDED TO INVESTIGATE BARRAGE FEASIBILITY.

3. WORKING PAPERS FOR BARRAGE PROJECT ARE NOT QUITE IN FINAL FORM,

BUT NONETHELESS LARGELY AT SENEGALESE INSISTANCE, JOINT-MINISTERIAL SESSION IN BANJUL WAS CALLED LAST WEEK TO DISCUSS BRIDGE/BARRAGE. ACCORDING TO TAAL, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS MAMADOU DINP, WHO HEADED SENEGALESE DELEGATION, CAME LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, WITH SENEGALESE PRESS IN TOW. HE TRIED TO FORCE ISSUE OF BRIDGE IN FULL ANTICIPATION OF NEGATIVE GAMBIA REACTION. TAAL FEELS DIOP IS SUFFERING FROM (UNSPECIFIED) POLITICAL PROBLEMS INTERNAL TO SENEGAL, AND WAS LOOKING TO MAKE HEADLINES IN DAKAR.

4. MEETING BROKE UP ON REASONABLY AMICABLE BASIS, BUT WITHOUT REACHING BASIC AGREEMENT. WHILE BARRAGE COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN ROUGHLY SAME TIMEFRAME PLANNED FOR BRIDGE, COST WILL BE IN NEIGHBORHOOD OF 30 MILLION POUNDS STERLING, AS COMPARED WITH NOW SOMEWHAT DATED ESTIMATE OF 15 MILLION POUNDS STERLING FOR BRIDGE. TAAL EMPHASIZED ADVANTAGES OF BARRAGE FOR THE GAMBIA AND SAID HE FELT FINANCE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, WITH INITIAL SEED CAPITAL OF ABOUT 5 MILLION POUNDS STERLING ALREADY EARMARKED FOR PROJECT BY EEC. GAMBIANS ARE COUNTING HEAVILY ON ARAB MONEY FOR BARRAGE.

5. TAAL SAYS MATTER HAS NOW BEEN KICKED UPSTAIRS TO PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL. IT IS EXPECTED THAT PRESIDENT JAWARA WILL FLY TO DAKAR SHORTLY AFTER NOV 22 (MOSLEM TABASKI HOLIDAY), TO DISCUSS THIS

ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT SENGHOR. TAAL CLAIMS GAMBIANS ARE CONFIDENT  
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PAGE 03 BANJUL 01591 161949Z

THEY HAVE GOOD CASE, SIR DAWDA IS WELL BRIEFED, AND PER SEC FEELS THAT APPEAL TO PRESIDENT SENGHOR'S WISDOM AND STATESMANSHIP WILL MAKE POSSIBLE AN AGREEMENT INCORPORATING ANTI-SALINITY BARRAGE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009